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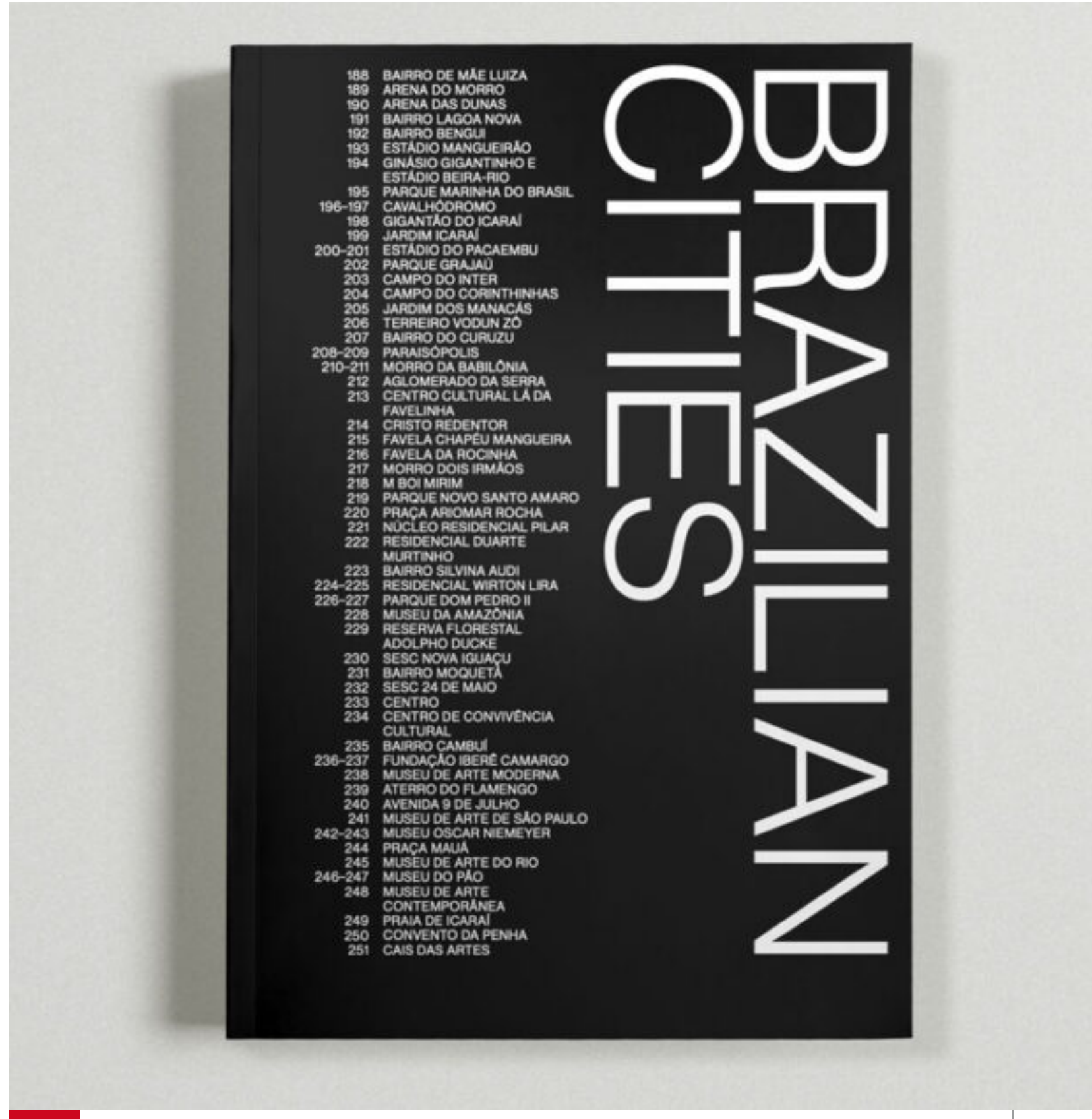
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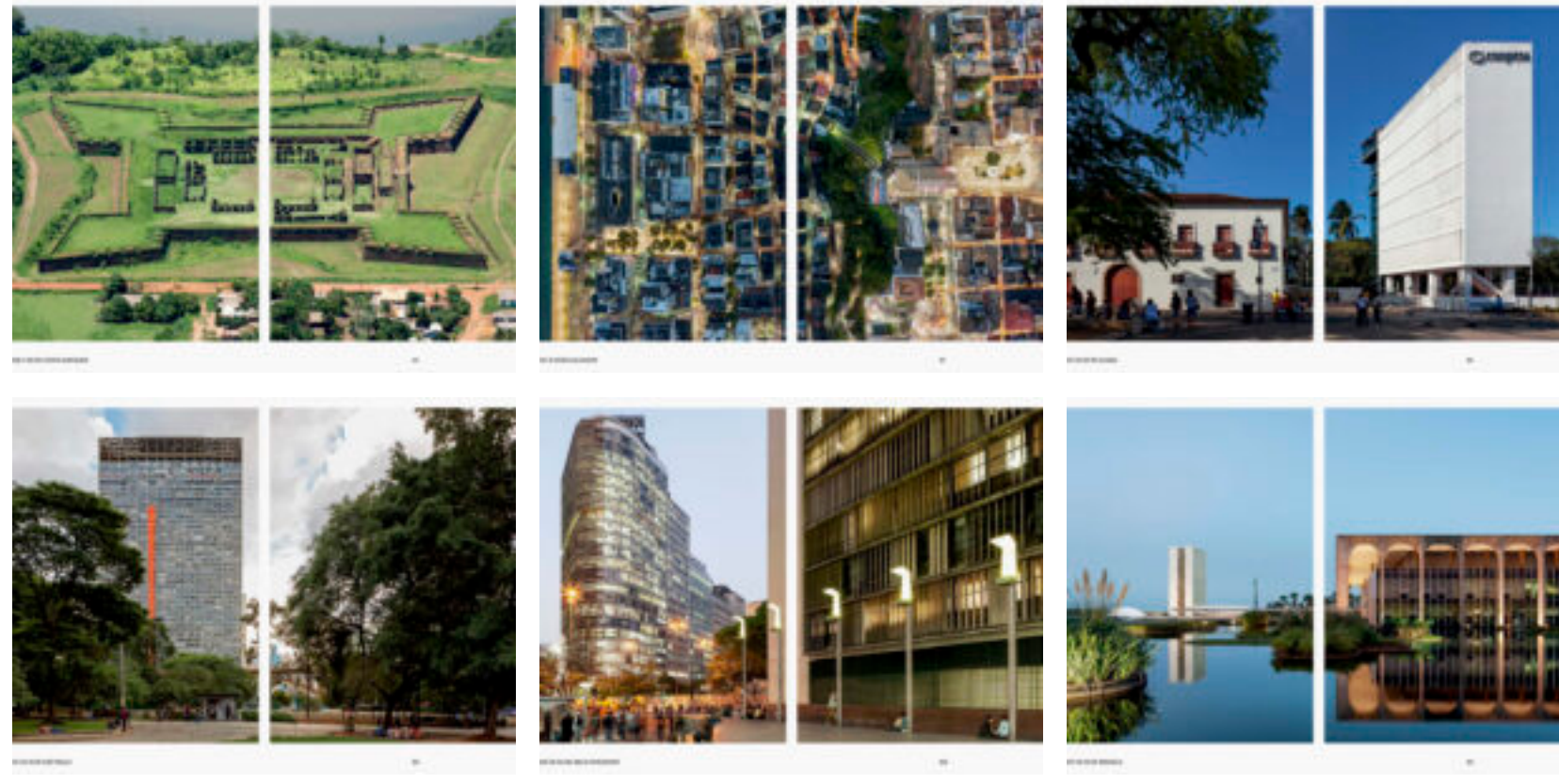
28 April 2023

Gaze on Brazil's cities

Giacomo Pirazzoli

With this new publication, the photographer Leonardo Finotti offers us a sophisticated reading of Brazilian architecture. And its relationship with the city and the landscape

An integral part of a multi-year research that he generously continues to make available even through his online archive, photographer Leonardo Finotti offers us a new reflection on Brazil's cities. Doing so with his usual low-profile, without ever directly claiming to belong to his country's great tradition of urban landscape photographers – from Marc Ferrez to Hildegard Rosenthal, to Marcel Gautherot (the official photographer of Brasília) just to name a few – and signalling a brilliant alternative to contemporary global reporters. Through 65 images from drones (or helicopters, in some cases) and almost as many from the ground – taken between 2006 and 2022 – he offers us his site-specific vision in continuity with his previous works, such as the one on Roberto Burle Marx, also characterised by the extensive use of photos taken with a drone.



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The volume opens with a formidable horizontal shot from the churchyard of the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Matosinhos in Congonhas (Minas Gerais), the work of the mysterious Baroque sculptor Aleijadinho, to whom Lucio Costa dedicated the screenplay of the essential documentary by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade (1978). It is an image that, in one fell swoop, ties this piece of colonial cultural heritage to the contemporary city and its landscape, forcibly holding within it a fragment of brutalised nature, a coconut palm. A few pages further on is the reflection on the cultural heritage that links the Grand Hotel of Ouro Preto (1938-40), the work of Oscar Niemeyer, with the architecture (again colonial) of the church of São Francisco de Paula on the horizon.



Finotti's images are preceded by an intriguing text by Andrey Rosenthal Schlee, an interesting 'urban taxonomy' developed via key words (settlement principle, urban fabric, design, paths, squares, courtyards, land use and architecture). Presented on two-page spreads with dates and places indicated, this account stirs up a strong desire for an edition that includes news and data, on the works and contexts that have been so well selected and offered to the reader's attention.



Cidades Brasileiras/Brazilian Cities

Photographs by Leonardo Finotti

Text by Andrey Rosenthal Schlee

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